

Amendments to the Specification:

On 9/27/06 ²⁶ Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 25, line 10, and continuing to page ~~16~~²⁶, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to Figure 1, the BDML processor consists of three parts that are executed in sequence: a syntax processor 11, a logic processor 12, and a knowledge-based processor 13. The syntax processor 11 checks that all mandatory BDML tags exist in the document, performs consistency checks on BDML tags and the Java-based syntax of variables and logical descriptions. The syntax processor 11 is similar to a computer programming language compiler and is constructed using standard tools of the compiler trade (see, for example, Thomas Pittman and James Peters, *The Art of Compiler Design: Theory and Practice*, Prentice Hall, 1991). The knowledge-based processor 13 provides suggestions to the user to correct any logical inconsistencies found in the BDML document(s). The knowledge-based processor matches the inconsistencies found by the logic processor 12 with cases contained in a knowledge base and ~~select~~ selects suggestions from the same knowledge base. This knowledge base contains business process scenarios that are commonly found and can be industry and context specific. For example, a knowledge base can be developed for a supply chain involving a retailer and multiple manufacturers that supply the retailer, or for the customer order fulfillment process of semiconductor manufacturers. The knowledge-based processor 13 is constructed using standard tools of the knowledge-based systems trade (see, for example, Cornelius T. Leondes (Editor), *Knowledge-Based Systems Techniques and Applications*, volumes 1-4, Academic Press, 2000).

Please replace the paragraph on page 29, lines 6 to 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In Figure 5, blocks ~~51a~~ 51A, ~~53a~~ 53A and ~~55a~~ 55A contain the objective for blocks 51, 53 and 55, respectively. Blocks 51 to 56 are identical to blocks 41